

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 AMMAN 02162 230957Z

15

ACTION SS-25

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O 230918Z APR 76
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7652
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, SA, US
SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

1. LOCAL ENGLISH AND ARABIC LANGUAGE PRESS HAVE PICKED UP REUTERS STORY TIED TO US GOVERNMENT SOURCES AND DATEDLINE WASHINGTON INDICATING HAWK MISSLE DEAL PRICE TO BE "CUT" BY \$300M. STORY INTRODUCES NOTION OF BAREBONES PACKAGE AND SEEMS TO IGNORE IDEA OF A SECOND STAGE. FINALLY, IT INDICATES US MAY BE WILLING TO HELP FINANCIALLY POINTING OUT NEED FOR CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL.

2. STORY CARRIES QUESTION GOOD BIT FARTHER THAN I HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO DO IN MY DISCUSSION WITH KING. NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT I WILL BE ASKED ABOUT IT AFTER KING'S RETURN FROM AQABA ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON. MY FEELING FROM HERE, IN VIEW OF THE EXCELLENT PROGRESS MADE BY AMBASSADOR PORTER AND HIS HOPE THAT WE CAN HOLD COMMENT HERE, IS MERELY TO REPEAT TO KING THAT WE BELIEVE WE HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS WITH THE SAUDIS AND THAT ANY FURTHER STORIES FROM HERE (AMMAN) WILL NOT HELP. THIS WILL OF COURSE BE LESS PERSUASIVE NOW THAT WASHINGTON IS LEAKING ALL OVER THE PLACE, BUT I THINK WE CAN HOLD THE ISSUE HERE BECAUSE IN THE MAIN STORY DOES NOT DIRECTLY DREDGE UP THESIS THAT SAUDIS ARE RESPONSIBLE, NOR DOES IT DIRECTLY COUNTER RIFAI THESIS THAT THERE WERE SOME PRICING UNCERTAINTIES. WHAT WILL REALLY HURT US HERE HOWEVER IS APPARENT TENDENCY FOR SECOND STAGE TO DISAPPEAR. WHILE IT ALREADY HAS ILLUSORY CHARACTER, I WILL NEED ALL SPECIFIES

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I CAN GET ABOUT CONCEPT OF A SECOND STAGE IF US SAUDI ARRANGEMENT

FOR FIRST STAGE DISCUSSED APRIL 20 IN RIYADH WORKS OUT AS

HOPED.

PICKERING

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NNN

Message Attributes

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